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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 648

Offered January 14, 2015

Directing the Virginia Housing Commission to study the prevalence in the Commonwealth of housing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Report.

Patron—Villanueva

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the Virginia Fair Housing Law (§ 36-96.1 et seq.) protects all citizens of the Commonwealth from unlawful discriminatory housing practices; and

WHEREAS, § 36-96.3 of the Virginia Fair Housing Law enumerates what constitutes an unlawful discriminatory housing practice, including to refuse to sell or rent after the making of a bona fide offer; to refuse to negotiate for the sale or rental of, or otherwise make unavailable or deny, a dwelling to any person because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, elderliness, or familial status; or to discriminate against any person in the terms, conditions, or privileges of sale or rental of a dwelling, or in the provision of services or facilities in the connection therewith to any person because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or elderliness; and

WHEREAS, while sexual orientation is generally understood to mean a person's actual or perceived heterosexuality, bisexuality, homosexuality, or gender identity or expression, not extending to any person's attraction toward persons with whom sexual conduct would be illegal due to the age of the parties, sexual orientation is not a protected class under the Virginia Fair Housing Law; and

WHEREAS, in a fair and just society, all citizens, regardless of sexual orientation, should be accorded dignity and deserve to be protected from discrimination in housing, one of the most basic human needs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Housing Commission be directed to study the prevalence in the Commonwealth of housing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

The Office of the Clerk of the House of Delegates shall provide administrative staff support. The Division of Legislative Services shall provide legal, research, policy analysis, and other services as requested by the Housing Commission. Technical assistance shall be provided to the Housing Commission by the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation and the Virginia Fair Housing Board. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Housing Commission for this study, upon request.

The Housing Commission shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2015, and the chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the 2016 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall state whether the Housing Commission intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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